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27 May 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Themes on Women


1. The members of the Federal Women's Program Board wish to express their appreciation for the interest and support which you expressed at our meeting with you on 10 May. We are particularly pleased by your intention to address the problems of women in your discussions with Agency managers.

2. The attached notes are intended as a preliminary response to your request for "themes" to use in your discussions. We have drafted separate paragraphs on each theme rather than providing you with a single paper on the subject. It was felt that this would make it easier to incorporate one or more of these themes in any larger presentation which you might be giving.

3. We appreciate the opportunity to provide this input, and would be happy to develop the themes further, incorporate them in a single paper, to add to them, or to modify them in any way that would make them more useful to you.

4. If there is any other way in which the Board can assist you in your task of providing equal opportunity for all employees, please let me know.

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Federal Women's Program Board

Attachments: a/s

PUBLIC IMAGE OF THE AGENCY

Much of the bad press which the Agency has received has come about when a program or policy has continued past its time, or when it has been executed with poor judgment. A reappraisal prior to the bad publicity could have saved us all a lot of trouble. EEO is just such an area. It is a potential trouble spot for any government agency. By moving constructively to improve our EEO record, the Agency can save itself a lot of unnecessary trouble in the future, and serve the cause of simple justice as well.

THE MANAGER AS "THE SYSTEM"

Government managers--unlike their counterparts in the private sector--tend to think that personnel management is being taken care of elsewhere in "the system." Thus, they may recommend that an employee "should be promoted at the earliest opportunity," or "should be given additional training," or "has the ability to take on greater responsibility" and feel that their duty is done.

Managers need to remind themselves continually that "the system" starts with them, and, indeed, that they are "the system." Personnel development is not going to happen unless each manager acts on his own observations or recommendations. Full utilization of employee skills, EEO, affirmative action--these should be part of the daily operating consciousness of every manager.

EVEN DISTRIBUTION OF TALENT

Scientific evidence indicates that there are only minor variations in intelligence and aptitudes between the sexes. Since ability is fairly evenly distributed throughout the population, when one race, sex or cultural group consistently emerges on top in an organization, a manager should ask himself what forces other than recognition of merit are at work in his organization, and what skills and talents are being wasted.

Personnel are the Agency's most valuable resource, and in today's tight budget world managers will want to use that resource to its fullest. Among the women and minorities in the CIA are untapped reservoirs of talent and ability lying idle for lack of the opportunity to move out of dead-end jobs and to increase their value to the Agency. Good managers plan ahead and get the most for their personnel dollars.

CHANGING ATTITUDES

Changing attitudes is a key factor in promoting equal opportunity for women. One means of changing attitudes would be to involve men and women together, regardless of hierarchical rank, in working groups and committees to arrive at solutions to significant office administrative and substantive problems. In addition to promoting teamwork, this device enables men and women to work together as equals and it permits unknown or unused skills of women (and men) to surface. Women as well as men should have the opportunity to chair such undertakings.

PROMOTION PANELS

It is important not only for managers to be fair, but to be seen as being fair. As long as women and blacks lack equal status with white males, they will tend to be suspicious of a decision-making process from which, for whatever reason, representatives of their race or sex are excluded. The inclusion of women and minorities on promotion panels will alleviate these suspicions and generate a greater feeling of trust in the objectivity and fairness of the system.

WHAT ARE A MANAGER'S OPTIONS?

Pressure from women and minority groups will increase.
Pressure from the Civil Service Commission will increase. What are a manager's options in responding to these pressures?

You can:

- Dig in your heels, and make charges about reverse discrimination.
- Meet any quotas imposed upon you to the letter, but otherwise continue business as usual.
- Take the initiative. Seek out, recruit, develop and promote the best women and minority candidates you can find.

You will reduce outside pressure and enjoy the added benefits that accrue when all the people working for you believe that their talents and efforts will be rewarded regardless of race, sex or age throughout their working careers.

FREEDOM OF CHOICE

The EEO movement does not require us to define a new role or position for women in society or in the Agency. It simply reinforces the traditional American concept of freedom of choice. Some women look on their jobs as a source of "extra family income." Others see themselves as possible future heads of the Agency. Women should have the opportunity to move as far as their talents and interests will take them. Managers, for their part, should not assume that a woman is not qualified or interested in any assignment or training because she is a woman.

OUR CHANGING SOCIETY

Because of changing population and economic trends, many young women today are not making motherhood a full-time career. The energies and ambitions which formerly were absorbed in child care are now being channeled into the pursuit of a career. As a result, women are becoming more career-centered, more ambitious, and, therefore, more assertive. Attempting to apply the cultural standards of the past in dealing with women employees today is not appropriate.

Women are entering the job market with essentially the same attitudes as men. They plan to spend most of their lives working. Married or single they see their salaries as an essential source of support. They are making plans for a career. Unlike many women in the past, they are not simply looking for a way to support themselves until they get married.

WOMEN'S LIBERATION IS NOT THE ISSUE

The women's liberation movement has raised a lot of controversy, but it is not the "gut" issue for women in the Agency. The real issue is that government salaries are paid by taxpayers, both male and female, black and white. Government agencies are required by law to treat all employees equally and to hire and to promote them solely on the basis of merit. Women's lib is open to debate, the law of the land is not.